(1) The rhino is included in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thus giving the species maximum possible legal protection. Trading in its horns and other products is totally prohibited.

(2) Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) of which India is a signatory, there is a complete ban on international trade in rhino horns.

(3) Government of India have been extending assistance to the Government of Assam under the centrally sponsored scheme 'Conservation of Rhinos in Assam' to strengthen measures to conserve and protect the rhino in all its natural habitats in Assam.

(4) Under the Centrally sponsored Scheme 'Control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products' assistance is provided to the State Governments to protect endangered species like the rhino.

(5) Central assistance is provided to the State Governments under the Centrally sponsored schemes 'Project Tiger' and 'Assistance for the development of National Parks and Sanctuaries to conserve and develop the protected areas containing rhinos.

(6) A number of zoos in India have been successfully breeding the Indian rhino in captivity.

(7) A project has been implemented to translocate rhinos in the Dudhwa National Park, Uttar Pradesh, to develop an alternative home to the species for its propagation.

Pollution caused by Thermal Power Plants

208. SHRI JAGADISH JANI : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that some thermal power plants are creating environmental problem;

(b) if so, the details of the thermal power plants which are polluting the air and water;

(c) what action has been taken against those thermal power plants; and

(d) by when these thermal power plants are expected to take anti-pollution measures ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRNOMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. According to the available information out of 87 Thermal Power plants in the country 22 are fully complying and 65 are partially complying with the prescribed emission standards.

(c) and (d) An action plan has been prepared by the State Governments to ensure that a polluting unit commissioned before 16th May, 1981 which has shown adequate proof of at least commencement of physical work for establishment of facilities to meet the specified standards is required to meet the standards within a time frame, latest by the 31st December, 1993. Those industries, commissioned after the 16th May, 1981 but before 31st December, 1991 shall meet the prescribed standards within a time frame, latest by 31st December, 1992.

Air Pollution in Bombay

209. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, it is a fact that Air Pollution has increased in Bombay to "sickening levels" with atleast 25 to 30 percent of school going children reported to be suffering from emphysema and bronchial asthma; and

(b) if so, what remedial steps have been taken to meet the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) The ambient air quality in the Bombay area is regularly being monitored by the Bombay Municipal Corporation,. The average results indicate that the ambient air quality in Bombay is within the prescribed limits.

There is no conclusive scientific report available on the suffering of school going children from emphysema and bronchial asthma due to air pollution in Bombay.

(b) The steps taken by the Government to meet the situation include the following:—

(1) Emission standards have been prescribed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

(2) Ambient air quality standards have been evolved.

(3) A net-work of ambient air quality monitoring stations has been set up.

(4) Metropolitan cities have been notified as Air Pollution Control Areas.

(5) Environmental guidelines have been evolved for siting and operation of industries.

(6) Industties have been asked to comply with consent requirements of the State Pollution Control Boards to keep the discharge of effluents and emissions within the stipulated limits.

(7) Industries have been directed to install necessary pollution control equipment on a time bound basis and legal action is taken against the defaulting units.

(8) 17 categories of heavily polluting industries have been identified and these industries have been asked by the State Government to comply with the effluent/emission standards.

(9) Fiscal incentives are provided for installation pollution control equipment and shifting of polluting industries from congested areas.

(10) Gross and mass emission standards for all vehicles have been notified under the Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989. The Ministrj' of Surface Transport have advised the various State Transport Directorates to enforce the gross emission standards with effect from 1st March, 1990.

(11) Public awareness compaigns have been launched about vehicular pollution.

(12) Prosecutions have been launched by the State Transport Directorate against the vehicle owners for violation of vehicular emission standards under the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989. In addition, certificates of fitness/pollution control certificates of polluting Vehicles are cancelled and their owners are instructed to comply with the prescribed standards, before issue of fresh certificates.

(13) Epidemiological studies have been initiated in heavily polluted areas.

Encroachment of Forests Land by Tribals

210. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government in the recent past held discussion with the Government of Madhya Pradesh on the demand for regulation of encroachment of forest land by tribals after 1977 and approval for distribution of pattas to families engaged in cultivation of forest land for the past 12 years in that state; and

(d) if so, what are the details of the discussions held and what decision taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (B) Diversion of 1- 03 lakhs hectares forests land for regularisation of pre 1980 encrochments in favour of eligible encroachers has been approved by the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. As per guidelines issued by the Ministry, diversion of forest land for regularsation of encroachments in favour of encroachers found ineligible as per criteria fixed by the State Government in 1978 can not be approved. This has been explained during discussions held with the State Govrment Officials in the recent past.

Harm to Human Health besides Environmental Pollution

211. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the thermal power stations in the countryy throw up one lakh tonnes of fly-ash every day, thereby causing immense harm to human health besides environmental pollution at a large scale ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the recently released report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Change (IPCC has again focussed attention on the fact that emissions from industrial activities on earth are substantially increasing the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases ;

(c) whether the global temperature would increase by 0.3 degrees celsiuse per decade if man-made pollution of the atmosphere is left unchecked ; and

(d) if so, what extent Government propose to counter these environmental and pollution hazards ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) It is estimated that thermal power stations in the country are generating about one lakh tonnes of fly-ash per day, creating environmental problems.

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) There is considerable scientific uncertainty about the rate at which global temperatures may increase on account of human activities.